United Nations

A/56/306

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session

Items 20, 20 (a), 37, 38, 40, 97, 107, 107 (c), 109, 109 (b), 109 (d), 110, 110 (a), 110 (b), 110 (c), 110 (e), 110 (f), 114, 115, 118, 118 (a), 118 (b), 119, 124 and 125 of the provisional agenda*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Science and technology for development: science and technology for development

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: human resources development; implementation of the commitments and policies agreed upon in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, and implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade

Environment and sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21; international strategy for disaster reduction; implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa; Convention on Biological Diversity; further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States; protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

* A/56/150.

01-51666 (E) 070901

Implementation of the Habitat Agenda and outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on this topic
Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010
High-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development
Advancement of women
Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Letter dated 19 July 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, I have the honour to bring to your attention, as requested by the Committee, its recommendation that major United Nations conferences should consider the contributions of space science and technology to a greater extent, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries.

In the past decade, the United Nations has held a series of global conferences to identify priorities for the twenty-first century to promote human development and to enhance human security. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Food Summit and the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction are only a few examples of such conferences.

As you are aware, benefits of space science and technology range from enhancing prediction of climate and weather forecast and disaster management to improving rural education. Space science and technology could play an important role in implementing some of the recommendations of those global conferences. However, as the Committee has noted, the final documents adopted by those conferences make little reference to the role of space science and technology.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000, agreed that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized by the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development. The Assembly also agreed that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is committed to taking action in response to that agreement of the Assembly.

Indeed, in June this year, the Committee agreed on a mechanism to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), in particular those contained in

the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by UNISPACE III.[1] With the assistance of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, 11 action teams, led by Governments, are being established to implement a number of recommendations of UNISPACE III. The list of those open-ended action teams, which will commence their work this year, as agreed by the Committee, is attached for your information (see annex). I anticipate the establishment of more action teams at a later stage to implement other recommendations.

I trust that, through your office, the progress being made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could be brought to the attention of the intergovernmental bodies, in particular their bureaux and secretariat bodies, that are implementing recommendations of the past major conferences or are preparing for conferences to be convened on economic, social and cultural development issues. The Office for Outer Space Affairs, which serves as the secretariat of the Committee, would continue to promote the use of space technology with other secretariat bodies through the existing inter-agency mechanism, such as the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. The members of the Committee would also make efforts to highlight the benefits of space technology and its applications as they participate in future conferences. I believe that those efforts, if combined, would lead to creating the synergy between the benefits of space applications and the work of the United Nations on development issues that the General Assembly called for in its resolution 55/122.

In this regard, I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly, together with the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,[2] under appropriate items of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Raimundo **González A.**
Chairman
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Notes

[1] *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/56/20).

Annex to the letter dated 19 July 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to the Secretary-General

List of open-ended action teams that will commence their work in 2001 to implement recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)

	Recommendation[a]	*Interim coordinator(s) (as at 5 July 2001)*	*Countries that have offered to be members (as at 5 July 2001)*
1	Develop a comprehensive, worldwide environmental monitoring strategy	To be determined	Argentina, Austria, China, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America
2	Improve the management of Earth's natural resources	India	Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America
4	Enhance weather and climate forecasting	Portugal	Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and United States of America
6	Improve public health services	Canada	Bulgaria, Canada, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and United States of America
7	Implement an integrated, global system to manage natural disaster mitigation, relief and prevention efforts	China (interim coordinator); Canada (co-coordinator); France (secretariat)	Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Egypt, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America
10	Improve universal access to and compatibility of space-based navigation and positioning systems	[United States (interim coordinator); Italy (co-coordinator)] To be confirmed	Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and United States of America
11	Promote sustainable development by applying the results of space research	African States, under the leadership of Nigeria	Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Lebanon, Monaco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and United States of America

	Recommendation[a]	*Interim coordinator(s) (as at 5 July 2001)*	*Countries that have offered to be members (as at 5 July 2001)*
14	Improve the international coordination of activities related to near-Earth objects	United Kingdom	Brazil, China, Finland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and United States of America
17	Enhance capacity-building by developing human and budgetary resources	Japan	Argentina, Azerbaijan, Brazil, France, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and United States of America
18	Increase awareness among decision makers and the general public of the importance of space activities	United States (interim coordinator); Austria (co-coordinator)	Austria, Brazil, Czech Republic, France, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and United States of America
32	Identify new and innovative sources of financing to support the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III	France	Czech Republic, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines and Syrian Arab Republic

[a] The recommendations have been numbered in accordance with their order of appearance in the Vienna Declaration.

United Nations A/56/307

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 20 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/163 of 14 December 2000, in which the General Assembly, among other things, called upon the international community to continue to implement measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, and requested me to prepare recommendations on how to improve the potential of the United Nations in this field.

2. Several of the areas mentioned in the resolution were already dealt with in my 2000 and 2001 reports to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the strengthening of coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/55/82-E/2000/61 and A/56/95-E/2001/85), and, in the latter document, in particular with reference to the use of technology for early warning, damage assessment and response planning. In addition, some complementary aspects to the present report are presented in my report to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council, dated 8 May 2001, on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/56/68-E/2001/63).

3. Since the adoption, ten years ago, of General Assembly resolution 46/182, of 19 December 1991, natural disasters have had an ever increasing impact on the lives and assets of human beings all over the world. The relevant reports of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly show a steady increase in the degree of vulnerability of communities to natural hazards, most notably in developing countries. In fact, the World Bank estimates that the likelihood of people in low-income countries dying in a natural disaster is four times higher than for people in high-income countries. Furthermore, the average cost of disasters as a proportion of gross domestic product can be 20 times higher in developing countries than in industrial ones. The recurrent nature of floods and drought and the problems they cause, for example, in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, do not leave sufficient time between them for effective recovery and rehabilitation efforts to take effect.

4. Humanitarian assistance provided by the international community over the period has been generous, but has not tackled the root causes of vulnerability. United Nations agencies agree that improvements will have to focus on better response preparedness and, more importantly, on longer-term

* A/56/150.

** The present report is being submitted on 20 August 2001, in order to include as much updated information as possible.

01-51710 (E) 170901

risk reduction measures, including prevention and mitigation.

5. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster response preparedness among the United Nations humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners. This system-wide responsibility encompasses a mechanism for centralized dissemination of information necessary to take decisions on assistance, make arrangements for coordination in situ of international response, track of contributions made and outstanding needs, and format the inter-agency appeals launched to include the transitional period between relief and reconstruction.

6. An increasing number of natural phenomena turn into disasters affecting entire regions. In response, United Nations agencies with mitigation responsibilities, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Bank, have considerably increased their disaster reduction capacities and funding. The loans of the World Bank for reconstruction and disaster mitigation since 1980 amount to some US$ 29 billion. Many of the recipient countries have received successive loans, as disasters have affected them time and again. United Nations agencies use opportunities in their post-disaster reconstruction activities to introduce measures aimed at the reduction of vulnerability against recurrent natural phenomena. Examples of this strategy can be found in the Disaster Management Facility of the World Bank, the UNDP Disaster Reduction and Recovery Programme and its support to the reconstruction work in India, Mozambique and Venezuela, as well as in the FAO Strategic Framework approach to food insecurity and rural poverty.

7. The World Bank's Disaster Management Facility completed a case study in 1999 on the capacity of Mexico to manage risk, following a request of the Government of that country. This led to the formulation of a project to address the need to reduce disaster losses, for which the World Bank made available a loan for over US$ 400 million. Similarly, the International Finance Corporation, a part of the World Bank, is focusing on new instruments in the area of weather-related events, including a Global Weather Risk Facility in developing countries. The World Bank's commitment to disaster reduction is also manifest in the ProVention initiative, launched in February 2000, which seeks, among other things, to develop methodologies for conducting damage and needs assessments.

8. The floods in Mozambique in 2000 and 2001 highlighted the recurrent nature of disasters and the need to recognize the importance of cooperation between relief and development actors. While the country-based United Nations agencies that had been actively involved in development work provided the initial support to the Government in responding to the disaster and in the subsequent recovery and reconstruction programmes, external relief agencies supplemented those efforts during the critical emergency periods. Following the Mozambique floods in 2000, United Nations development agencies and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recognized the recurrent nature of the disaster and undertook a preparedness and contingency planning exercise that resulted in an improved response capability during the 2001 floods.

9. Long-term measures that tend to reduce the impact of disasters, and in particular those aimed at reducing vulnerability to hazards, are of fundamental importance in order to operate an effective transition from relief to development. Disaster reduction is a specific area of work which includes prevention and mitigation, as well as some aspects of preparedness. The implementation of disaster reduction measures constitutes a central aspect of any sustainable development policy; therefore it is also an essential part of the process from relief to development. Although it cannot be assimilated to the operational activities relating to relief and recovery, disaster reduction can become a positive asset in post-relief situations, especially with regard to the positive impact of targeted policies for community level advocacy, awareness raising and preparedness training. In yet another example, disaster reduction considerations may underpin lessons learned exercises, which while currently often limited to the analysis of disaster relief aspects, could be carried out in the aftermath of major disasters.

10. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999 with the aim of reducing the vulnerability of societies to natural and

other environmental and technological hazards. The Strategy is an inter-agency programme within which a number of actors from both within and outside the United Nations system coordinate initiatives and programmes with the ultimate objective of creating resilience to hazards, especially in less developed countries (see A/54/497). In those countries, the transition from relief to development is longer and more complicated, as it entails variables arising in most cases from high levels of vulnerability. Vulnerability to hazards is a serious obstacle to any form of development and, as such, represents an additional burden for societies in the post-disaster phase. This is one of the main reasons that the programme of the Strategy places particular emphasis on the role of civil society in disaster reduction.

11. Disasters affect societies in all their aspects. Moreover, vulnerability to all hazards is created at the local level. That is why the active participation of relevant layers of civil society is a precondition for effective disaster prevention and mitigation. The principles of the Strategy in this respect refer to the importance of education and training, as well as community-based risk mapping and vulnerability assessment. These principles may be used as appropriate in relevant phases from relief to development, thereby improving the efficacy of the transition process and probably facilitating sound development practices, once the recovery phase is completed. Examples of disaster reduction activities can be drawn from the experience of the International Strategy and from the activities of agencies and organizations operating within the framework of the Strategy. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/56/68-E/.2001/63) contains details on the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations agencies.

12. Just as it may become necessary to augment existing capacities on the ground during a major emergency, smooth transition into recovery can also require external strengthening of capacities from an early stage. Skills that are necessary for recovery and subsequent reconstruction for sustainable development are fundamentally different than those for emergency response. The concept of transitional recovery teams has been introduced by UNDP to meet this need by further strengthening the capacity of its country offices and the resident coordinator system to initiate appropriate and timely support to early recovery efforts of the national authorities. The transitional recovery teams will assist with formulating comprehensive recovery frameworks for bridging relief assistance and development cooperation; strengthening the country office capacity for assessment and programming assistance to the national authorities; and supporting operational coordination mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies. The concept of transitional recovery teams was tested in India following the Gujarat earthquake, where the link between the response efforts and the transition to recovery process was effectively put into practice. The international community should support the further development and testing of this concept and encourage UNDP to further strengthen its capacity in this area.

13. Moving from a situation of relief to one of effective recovery is not limited to post-disaster institutional arrangements to support the national authorities. Many disasters reveal structural vulnerabilities and unsustainable development models that agencies on the ground need to take into consideration in their longer-term strategic support to high-risk countries and regions. At the country level, UNDP has been supporting more than 50 national capacity-building programmes in natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. Many of these have started to mainstream disaster reduction within broader development strategies, attending to a range of national, local, municipal and community level needs and integrating capacity-building initiatives into a framework of overall programme support for disaster risk and vulnerability reduction.

14. The General Assembly has, on numerous occasions, including in its resolution 46/182, instructed the Emergency Relief Coordinator to mobilize, direct and coordinate all international assistance to a natural disaster in response to a request from a country affected by disaster. In 2001, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has been performing this function in the face of a changing natural disaster environment of greater losses, resulting from increasing urbanization, and the ever swifter response required by a vigilant and fast responding international media. This has focused on the need for the United Nations response to be faster and more coherent than ever before. The Emergency Relief Coordinator has tried to adjust to these demands by streamlining the United Nations response systems and engaging prominent disaster-prone countries in an

effort to build awareness of the tools that the international system can deploy to assist them. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also engaged UNDP, in making resident coordinators aware of their responsibilities in that regard, and of international response tools that can be deployed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator to assist the countries in which they serve. More effort is needed to ensure that other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors are integrated into the efforts of the Emergency Relief Coordinator to promote an effective and coherent international response to natural disasters.

15. The United Nations disaster assessment and coordination team system remains one of the most effective and participatory international rapid response tools available to the Emergency Relief Coordinator. It carried out 11 missions during 2000 to assist in coordinating international response to natural disasters in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America. The situations to which these teams were deployed included floods in Cambodia, Mozambique and Viet Nam, an earthquake in China and drought in Paraguay. In the first half of 2001, six missions were undertaken, including in response to the severe winter in Mongolia, floods in Russia and earthquakes in El Salvador, India and Peru. Over 20 countries and international organizations from Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas have provided experts to participate in these missions. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also carried out a thorough and extensive independent review of the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination system, led by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This, coupled with a review of the performance of the United Nations in response to the earthquake in India in early 2001, has raised some useful recommendations for further improvement of the system, which the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is implementing in collaboration with partner countries and organizations. In pursuance of the directions of the General Assembly, the Office is making efforts to expand the system's participation to more developing countries and has created a United Nations disaster assessment and coordination Caribbean team this year.

16. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, of which the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is the secretariat, has also taken major steps in 2001 to speed up the response of international urban search and rescue teams in the event of an earthquake. It has developed the Virtual On Site Operations Coordination Centre for urban search and rescue teams to gain real time information while deploying and operating. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group has reactivated its Americas wing and incorporated many Latin American countries into its activities. It has also planned an international urban search and rescue exercise in the Asia Pacific region. The Advisory Group has also pursued the creation of a legal framework for international urban search and rescue operations, a project that received considerable support from Member States in the recently concluded humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council.

17. Natural disasters have far-reaching consequences for both the environment and the well-being of people. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) through its Joint Environmental Emergency Unit, is focusing increased attention on ensuring an improved response capacity (including a rapid response) to such environment-related incidents. The Environmental Emergency Unit is well placed to build the necessary bridges between environmental and humanitarian concerns of various disasters. A dialogue has been initiated with humanitarian and environmental partners to develop appropriate contingency plans and to ensure an adequate level of emergency response preparedness. As a specific tool, a global network of officially designated environment national focal points has been developed, which serves as the conduit for accessing information and accessing assistance. The network is being continuously expanded and currently includes representatives from more than 100 countries in all major regions. the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNEP have also undertaken special projects aimed at developing and elaborating on existing tools to assist countries in improving their capacity to respond to environmental emergencies.

18. The Military and Civil Defence Unit was established in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs pursuant to a decision of the Inter-agency Standing Committee in 1995 to ensure the most efficient use of military and civil defence assets in support of humanitarian operations. It serves as the

United Nations focal point for Governments, international organizations and military and civil defence establishments for the deployment of those assets in humanitarian situations and coordinates their mobilization when needed. The Unit conducts the United Nations civil-military cooperation courses, and coordinates United Nations agency participation in major exercises with humanitarian scenarios. It also maintains the United Nations Central Register, which is a database of non-commercial governmental and other resources that may be available for humanitarian use. These resources include a wide range of equipment and supplies, expert teams and disaster response contacts.

19. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also maintains a stockpile of basic survival items, such as tents, blankets, kitchen sets, generators and water-purification and distribution equipment at the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot in Brindisi, Italy. These goods are donated by various Governments and can be shipped at short notice by air, land or sea to disaster-stricken countries.

20. Given the typically sudden character of natural disasters, and of the often total disruption of public telecommunication networks resulting from their impact, the provision of reliable, independent telecommunications links is a prerequisite for efficient assessment of damages, mobilization of resources, coordination of operations and acquisition of information for dissemination through information systems, such as ReliefWeb. In this context, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has three roles: providing telecommunications support for certain field operations; facilitating the inter-operability of field networks of all partners in disaster response; and ensuring the unhindered use of information and communications technology.

21. At the regional level, United Nations agencies have been working closely with regional and subregional groupings, assisting them in identifying their needs and capacity in disaster management and risk reduction. In East Africa, FAO has developed a regional strategy for disaster preparedness to assist the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Africa); in Southern Africa, UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have been supporting the Southern African Development Community secretariat in developing a comprehensive disaster management strategy; and similar efforts are being made by a number of United Nations agencies in the Economic Community of West African States to enhance the national and local capacities. UNDP has been supporting the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency in the Caribbean, the Centro de Coordinación para la Prevención de Desastres Naturales en América Central in Central America and the Stability Pact in South-eastern Europe as regional entities for the same objectives. These capacity-building programmes are essential for reducing disaster risks and hence the need for relief and recovery assistance. Support in this direction will also assist in creating stronger national institutions and ongoing cooperation between the national authorities and the United Nations agencies, which are essential ingredients of recovery from a major scale disaster.

22. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, with the objective of strengthening response preparedness, has established offices for regional disaster response advisers in South America, Asia and the Pacific. To further extend coverage, the Office is planning to strengthen existing offices and to establish new offices in Africa and in Asia. The advisers have a three-pronged mandate: support United Nations country teams in preparing inter-agency contingency planning, involving, if appropriate, the national authorities; lead disaster response coordination missions; and organize lessons learned workshops in situ with the country teams after the relief phase in order to fine-tune disaster response preparedness. The international community should support these facilities and consider establishing similar offices at the subregional level.

23. UNDP has also established regional disaster reduction adviser positions to cover needs, initially, in Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe. These advisers will enhance and facilitate the formulation and implementation of both subregional and national capacity-building programmes and provide enhanced technical support inputs to policy and strategy formulation, partnership and alliance-building, advocacy and training for disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation, as well as effective recovery programming. The international community should support this initiative and consider further expansion of this facility into other regions where disaster reduction and recovery planning is frequently needed.

24. Most United Nations agencies build on existing national and regional capacities to carry out disaster

reduction activities in disaster-prone developing countries. Efforts to bring these capacities together in a systematic manner are under way. The UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme, a worldwide, inter-agency facility, using national and regional capacities to improve response, mitigation and vulnerability reduction capacities is a case in point. The Disaster Management Training Programme adopted a new programme concept for the biennium 2000-2003 at its Advisory Committee Meeting, held in Geneva on 29 September 2000. As a contribution to the programme concept, a guide, entitled "The role and responsibilities of the United Nations disaster management teams" was developed and approved by the Inter-agency Standing Committee's Working Group on 15 September 2000. The guide provides support to the United Nations country teams and mainly covers issues related to disaster response management, including coordination and collaboration in this field. This guide was utilized in a number of country workshops between September 2000 and June 2001, such as those conducted in Azerbaijan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nicaragua and Turkey.

25. An inventory of existing disaster mitigation capacity does not yet exist, but the usefulness of such a facility, its scope of application for the United Nations, Governments and donors should be further explored. It is recommended that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP and other partners, take the lead in this respect and appraise the General Assembly on the results.

United Nations A/56/308

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 20 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Report of the Secretary-General**

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 49/139 B of 20 December 1994, 50/19 of 28 November 1995, 52/171 of 16 December 1997 and 54/98 of 8 December 1999, called on the United Nations Volunteers, a programme administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, together with the entire United Nations system, to encourage the use of the expertise available through the White Helmets Initiative. That initiative was established by the Government of Argentina with the aim of promoting the concept of pre-identified, standby and trained teams of volunteers from various national volunteer corps that can be placed at the disposal of the Secretary-General in support of immediate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities.

2. The present report covers the period from July 1999 to July 2001. It provides an overview of further progress made in collaboration with different partners, in particular with the Government of Argentina, through the White Helmets Commission of Argentina.

3. The report describes highlights of programme activities and their results, existing mechanisms and partnerships, financing and resource mobilization and underscores opportunities for widening the operationalization of the concept. The joint initiative and the consequent United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets programme were highly appreciated by many parties. Recipients, United Nations country offices and the many individuals and organizations consulted considered the programme relevant as a mechanism in support of humanitarian activities.

4. Within the framework envisaged in the General Assembly resolutions, the Government of Argentina, through the White Helmets Commission, continued actively to support the expansion of the programme in collaboration with the United Nations Volunteers. The United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets Commission partnership is an example of how the White Helmets concept and modality can be applied successfully. While most activities were carried out through their partnership, other countries have

* A/56/150.

** The present report is being submitted on 21 August 2001 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

01-51728 (E) 100901

designated focal points through which a widening of the initiative can be explored and pursued.

II. Highlights of programme activities

5. The following activities, among others, were undertaken in the context of the United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets Commission partnership since the most recent report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in 1999:

(a) The White Helmets Commission was appointed focal point for the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, and has actively participated in the promotion and celebration of the Year. Having first emerged as a concept within the United Nations system in 1996, the International Year of Volunteers, 2001, was adopted on 20 November 1997 by the Assembly at its fifty-second session in resolution 52/17 as a way of promoting the valuable concept of volunteerism. Its four objectives are increased recognition, increased facilitation, networking and promotion. The concept includes local and national volunteer efforts, as well as bilateral and international programmes, which operate across borders. The underlying premise is that voluntary service is required more than ever to tackle areas of priority concern in the social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and peace-building fields and that more people are needed to offer their services as volunteers;

(b) In response to an appeal by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and at the request of the World Food Programme within the context of the floods affecting Mozambique in March 2000, the White Helmets Commission selected volunteers to serve as food distribution monitors and to provide social welfare support to displaced persons at evacuation centres;

(c) The White Helmets Commission has established rapid response teams, to be fielded within 72 hours of an emergency. A joint exercise of the United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets Commission was undertaken in April 2000, where a team of experts was identified and pre-selected to form the nucleus of the rapid response team;

(d) Taking into account an appeal issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in response to the situation created by the earthquakes that struck El Salvador in early 2001, and in accordance with the White Helmets Initiative and United Nations Volunteers rapid response to humanitarian emergencies project, a team was fielded in San Salvador in less than 72 hours. It worked with local authorities and United Nations system agencies in the identification of immediate emergency and reconstruction needs required by the Government for planning purposes. In coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund, a United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets team of architects was sent to El Salvador to help in the reconstruction of local school buildings;

(e) In response to an appeal through the United Nations Volunteers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme, White Helmets identified and fielded a team of volunteers to provide support activities in refugee camps in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

(f) The Governments of France and Argentina agreed to implement the third phase of a community development and drinking water project, aimed at supporting a non-governmental organization with potable water activities in southeastern Haiti. The activities consist of water system maintenance and sanitary education in water-related diseases;

(g) Three municipalities in the occupied Palestinian territory requested the implementation of a White Helmets regional project in urban planning and geographic information systems along the lines of earlier activities in the Gaza Strip. This project was executed in cooperation with a Federation of Canadian Municipalities project and had the financial support of Argentina and Finland;

(h) A programme for controlling and eradicating brucellosis in the Gaza Strip was launched in mid-February 1998 in collaboration with the National Institute of Agricultural and Livestock Technology of Argentina and the World Health Organization under the coordination of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Jerusalem;

(i) Within the framework of a UNDP ongoing project, a White Helmets project was launched with the objective of supporting the municipalities in the area of Bethlehem in their efforts to improve infrastructure, use of public spaces and special projects designed to

cope with the expected influx of tourists for the millennium celebrations;

(j) During a meeting of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), held in Buenos Aires in June 2000, it was agreed that regional humanitarian aid actions should be strengthened and properly coordinated. It is to this end that White Helmets are currently working on an action plan that would include MERCOSUR member States Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and associated partners Bolivia and Chile;

(k) In view of the success of the White Helmets sports project in Lebanon, implemented in cooperation with Blue Helmets assigned to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets initiated, in March 2001, a programme with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo to support sports development in Kosovo, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets help to develop programmes for training, coaching and social sports activities;

(l) In coordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a volunteer with the United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets is collaborating during 2001 with the local office in Ecuador in assisting displaced persons from Colombia;

(m) At the request of the United Nations Volunteers, two White Helmets volunteers were sent to Guyana as observers during the national elections held in March 2001;

(n) Hosted by the Government of Venezuela and in the framework of a UNDP project, a White Helmets Initiative Seminar was held in Caracas in May 2001 with the participation of representatives of Government offices, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system agencies;

(o) As a consequence of the devastating earthquake that hit Gujarat province in India in early 2001 and at the request of the Government of India, the White Helmets Commission has identified three earthquake specialists to develop a prevention-based programme.

6. Assistance to countries provided by the White Helmets directly, outside the partnership with the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations system, has also demonstrated the potential success of fielding pre-identified, standby and trained teams of volunteers:

(a) In December 1999, as a result of the devastating floods that affected Venezuela and at the request of the Government, the White Helmets Commission sent a volunteer team specialized in emergency supply management systems to install software and train the Red Cross personnel of Venezuela in the use of hardware. Medical assistance was also given;

(b) Upon request by the local authorities, three volunteer experts in emergency supply management systems were sent to El Salvador to help in the installation of software and the training of local personnel in its use;

(c) Within the framework of a humanitarian demining programme, four White Helmets international supervisors have been involved in demining activities in Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua since January 1999;

(d) In 1999, on the recommendation of a reconnaissance mission that included the delivery of humanitarian assistance for the emergency caused by Hurricane Mitch, a White Helmets and Organization of American States mission was carried out in Nicaragua for the agricultural and cattle-breeding sector with the objective of diagnosing the impact of the disaster on small-scale cattle breeders with a view to restoring and improving, where possible, the production capacity affected by Hurricane Mitch;

(e) In response to the needs identified by the initial mission following Hurricane Mitch, a health education programme financed by the White Helmets Initiative and the Organization of American States special fund was launched in February 1999 in Jinotega, Nicaragua, with the objective of achieving public awareness among the largely indigenous population of the importance of hygiene maintenance and safe water usage;

(f) A second project within this framework was carried out jointly with the Pan American Development Foundation and was financed by the White Helmets Initiative and the Organization of American States special fund. A preparatory mission was sent to identify the necessary equipment for two Honduran hospitals severely damaged by Hurricane Mitch. The provision of qualified support for the reinstallation and

specific equipping of both medical centres also included local staff training to ensure the appropriate use and maintenance of the equipment delivered in each case;

(g) Following the earthquake that affected southern Peru in June 2001, four White Helmets volunteers were fielded to assist with emergency supply management, provide psychological support to the victims and assist with the assessment of structural damages.

III. Existing mechanisms and partnerships

7. All United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets Commission activities continued to be implemented within the framework of humanitarian assistance and development programmes of the United Nations agencies, directly responding to requests from host Governments or to appeals by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

8. During the reporting period, activities were undertaken in collaboration with such United Nations agencies as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Food Programme, United Nations peacekeeping operations and national institutions in the beneficiary countries. During joint venture missions in Angola, Haiti and the occupied Palestinian territory, White Helmets had the financial and technical support of the Governments of France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Spain and the United States of America.

9. The United Nations Volunteers and White Helmets Commission programme cooperation review of 1999 took note of the experience gained with the operationalization of the White Helmets concept and indicated that the concept could be translated into a valuable assistance modality. There is therefore scope to build further on the potential and to expand partnerships with other national volunteer corps, civil society, regional organizations and multilateral funding institutions.

10. Owing to the success of the recent joint missions in El Salvador, a White Helmets Initiative, United Nations Volunteers and United Nations Children's Fund standby agreement is currently being studied for future collaboration.

IV. Financing and resource mobilization

11. The General Assembly in its resolution 49/139 B endorsed the establishment of a special financing window as part of the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers.

12. The Government of Argentina continues to be the primary contributor to the United Nations Volunteers special financing window. However, a number of other countries have expressed interest in supporting activities through cash or in-kind contributions.

13. On 1 July 1999, a Regional Technical Cooperation agreement was signed between the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Development Bank. Within the agreement framework, the Inter-American Development Bank resolved to make a non-reimbursable contribution of US$ 750,000, or its equivalent in any convertible currency, for the execution of White Helmets volunteers operations within the continent. This is an important first step that will facilitate the integration of a fund, administrated by the Organization of American States, to finance humanitarian actions through the White Helmets Initiative.

14. Other potential sources of additional financing continue to be explored. Examples are the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations. The necessary documentation was exchanged with the Programme in order to reach an agreement to finance White Helmets operations in places and activities of mutual interest.

V. Concluding observations

15. Findings from the 1999 joint programme cooperation review conducted by the United Nations Volunteers and the White Helmets Commission indicate that an increasing number of Member States are willing to consider creating and strengthening their volunteer capacities in support of the White Helmets Initiative. The concept of pre-identified, standby and trained teams of volunteers is seen as a modality that can be made available to the United Nations Volunteers

programme in support of immediate relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities.

16. Taking into account General Assembly resolution 54/98, the Government of Argentina ratified its support to the White Helmets Initiative and designated a new president and board members for the Commission, who jointly with the United Nations Volunteers have developed White Helmets missions since 2000.

17. In order for the United Nations Volunteers, the White Helmets Commission and other participating Governments to build further upon the aforementioned successes and enable replication of these experiences in other Member States, it is hoped that additional financial contributions to the special financial window of the United Nations Volunteers can be mobilized.

United Nations A/56/309

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 85 (f) of the provisional agenda*
General and complete disarmament: towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda

Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda**

Report of the Secretary-General

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	Introduction	1–2	2
II.	Observations	3–8	4

* A/56/150.

** Finalization of the report was dependent on the work of the 2001 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

01-51734 (E) 170901

I. Introduction

1. On 20 November 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/33 C, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", paragraphs 1 to 19 of which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. *Agrees* on the importance and urgency of signatures and ratifications, without delay and without conditions and in accordance with constitutional processes, to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty;

"2. *Calls* for the upholding of a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions pending entry into force of the above-mentioned Treaty;

"3. *Agrees* on the necessity for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the report of the Special Coordinator of 1995 and the mandate contained therein, taking into consideration both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives, and urges the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty, with a view to their conclusion within five years;

"4. *Agrees also* on the necessity of establishing within the context of the Conference on Disarmament an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament, and urges the Conference to agree on a programme of work which includes the immediate establishment of such a body;

"5. *Calls* for the principle of irreversibility to apply to nuclear disarmament, nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures;

"6. *Calls also* for the early entry into force and full implementation of the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, while preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as a cornerstone of strategic stability and as a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive weapons, in accordance with the provisions of that Treaty;

"7. *Calls further* for the completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the International Atomic Energy Agency;

"8. *Calls* for steps to be taken by all nuclear-weapon States that would lead to nuclear disarmament in a way that promotes international stability and, based upon the principle of undiminished security for all, for:

(*a*) Further efforts to be made by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally;

(*b*) Increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear weapons capabilities, and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and as a voluntary confidence-building measure to support further progress in nuclear disarmament;

(*c*) The further reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons, based on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;

(*d*) Concrete agreed measures to reduce further the operational status of nuclear weapons systems;

(*e*) A diminishing role for nuclear weapons in security policies so as to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination;

(*f*) The engagement, as soon as appropriate, of all the nuclear-weapon States in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons;

"9. *Calls also* for arrangements by all nuclear-weapon States to place, as soon as practicable, the fissile material designated by

each of them as no longer required for military purposes under International Atomic Energy Agency or other relevant international verification and arrangements for the disposition of such material for peaceful purposes in order to ensure that such material remains permanently outside military programmes;

"10. *Reaffirms* that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament under effective international control;

"11. *Calls* for regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI of the Treaty and paragraph 4 (c) of the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, and, in this regard, recalls the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996;

"12. *Agrees* to pursue the further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world;

"13. *Calls upon* all States not yet party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, promptly and without condition, in particular those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities, and also calls upon those States to bring into force the required comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, consistent with the Model Protocol Additional to the Agreement(s) between State(s) and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the Application of Safeguards approved by the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency on 15 May 1997, for ensuring nuclear non-proliferation, and to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear weapons development or deployment and refrain from any action that could undermine regional and international peace and security and the efforts of the international community towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation;

"14. *Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to conclude full-scope safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to conclude additional protocols to their safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol;

"15. *Notes* the paramount importance of effective physical protection of all nuclear material, and calls upon all States to maintain the highest possible standards of security and physical protection of nuclear materials;

"16. *Notes also* that the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons agreed that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, and that it called upon the Preparatory Committee to make recommendations on this issue to the 2005 Review Conference;

"17. *Reaffirms* the conviction that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament, and supports proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not yet exist, such as in the Middle East and South Asia;

"18. *Affirms* that a nuclear-weapon-free world will ultimately require the underpinning of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument or a framework encompassing a mutually reinforcing set of instruments;

"19. *Acknowledges* the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/54 G, and requests him, within existing resources, to prepare a report on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 55/33 C.

II. Observations

3. On at least two important occasions last year, the international community underlined that efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons remain an important priority. In the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference of identifying ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

4. In May 2000, at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties to that Treaty agreed, inter alia, on certain practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts on nuclear disarmament, which constitute concrete benchmarks for evaluating progress in this field. Furthermore, the States parties unanimously agreed that the elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons.

5. The challenge ahead for the international community is to see these steps through to their earliest and full implementation at all levels. Despite the political commitments made, the level of international cooperation in disarmament remains lower than it could and should be. The persistence of divergent views on the most pressing issues on the international disarmament agenda has once again affected the work of the Conference on Disarmament this year.

6. Several multilateral agreements still await either their entry-into-force or their effective implementation and their universality. There is also concern about the future of some important arms control and disarmament agreements. Progress can only be made if measures taken at the unilateral and bilateral levels towards nuclear disarmament are aimed at strengthening the global security environment. The Secretary-General notes the Joint Statement made by the Russian Federation and the United States of America on 22 July 2001 regarding upcoming consultations on strategic issues, in which the two countries expressed their intention to commence intensive consultations on the interrelated subjects of offensive and defensive systems.

7. Five years ago, on 24 September 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature. At present, however, prospects for near-term entry into force of the Treaty remain uncertain, despite the impressive fact that 161 States have signed the Treaty and 79 have ratified it, including 31 of the 44 States whose ratification is specifically required for the Treaty to become effective. The Secretary-General hopes that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is scheduled to take place from 25 to 27 September 2001 in New York, will underscore the importance of that Treaty and generate renewed efforts for its earliest entry into force. He reiterates his call on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay and without conditions. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is essential that a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions be upheld.

8. The Secretary-General also notes the deliberations and the proposals put forward, in particular, on paragraphs 3 and 4 of resolution 55/33 C, by delegations in the Conference on Disarmament.

United Nations A/56/310

General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 131 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Protection of migrants

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. At its fifty-fifth session, in resolution 55/92 of 4 December 2000, the General Assembly welcomed the renewed commitment made in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies.

2. The General Assembly reaffirmed the responsibility of Governments to safeguard and protect the rights of migrants against illegal or violent acts, in particular acts of racial discrimination and crimes perpetrated with racist or xenophobic motivation by individuals or groups, and urged them to reinforce measures in that regard; urged all States to adopt effective measures to put an end to the arbitrary arrest and detention of migrants, including by individuals or groups; and called upon all States to protect the human rights of migrant children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children.

3. The Secretary-General was requested to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of resolution 55/92 under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

4. Pursuant to that resolution, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights transmitted, on 15 June 2001, a note verbale to Governments on behalf of the Secretary-General, drawing their attention, in particular, to paragraphs 2, 4 to 9 and 11 of resolution 55/92.

5. On 11 July 2001, the Government of **Cuba** transmitted a reply expressing its concern at the violations of the human rights of migrants as well as at the manifestations of racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination and inhuman and degrading treatment against migrants. Specifically, the Government noted that it considered it necessary to address the structural causes of economic migration, stating that while there was freedom of mobility for goods and services, immigration policies were ever more restrictive and discriminatory. In its reply, the Government of Cuba also stated that Cuban authorities made great efforts to prevent illegal migration from

* A/56/150.

** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/222, section III, paragraph 10, the present report is being submitted on 20 August 2001 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

01-51740 (E) 180901

Cuba to the United States of America, and it referred to the bilateral agreements which were signed by both countries in 1981 and 1984.

6. On 13 July 2001, the Government of **Thailand** provided a reply stating that Thailand fully protected the human rights of legal migrants according to Thai national law and its Constitution (B.E. 2542-1997). The Government also stated that it worked closely with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations to assist and protect migrant populations in irregular situations. Furthermore, it gave the assurance that in some cases illegal migrants were authorized to work in restricted occupations until they were repatriated, receiving equal treatment and full protection of their rights, including social security and other provisions under the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541. The Government further asserted that all migrants, regardless of their legal status, received medical treatment upon request. On the issue of trafficking, the Government detailed measures taken to combat human trafficking, particularly of children and women, including new and improved legislation as well as regional and bilateral initiatives and the creation of the National Secretariat on Trafficking in Women and Children in the Mekong Subregion. Finally, the Government of Thailand reported that it had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and was in the process of signing both its additional protocols.

7. On 30 July 2001, the Government of **Mauritius** transmitted information on its implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/92. It stated that Mauritius had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Migration for Employment (Revised), 1949 (No. 97). It accordingly ensured that, with regard to fundamental principles and rights at work, migrant workers did not receive treatment less favourable than that enjoyed by Mauritian nationals in respect of remuneration, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, etc. They were also free to join trade unions and enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining.

8. On 31 July 2001, the Government of **Ecuador** reported that, concerning paragraphs 2 and 4 of resolution 55/92, the legal protection of migrants was guaranteed under article 13 of Ecuador's current Constitution and the Aliens Act. In addition, article 23 of the Constitution of Ecuador recognized the principles of non-discrimination and equality before the law. With regard to the increasing number of Ecuadorians who were becoming migrants, it was reported that a wide range of measures had been taken by the Government of Ecuador in order to promote and protect the rights of Ecuadorian migrants and their families. Thus, the Government stated that national consultations had been scheduled in order to adopt a national plan for Ecuadorian migrants. Through that mechanism the State and the civil society agreed to launch a process to achieve the ratification of a number of international instruments, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Government also reported that it was providing specialized training for civil servants who were dealing with migrants in order to make known the national legal norms that could be applied to that group. Moreover, the Government of Ecuador reiterated its desire to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the human rights of migrants in the performance of her tasks and duties and has invited the Special Rapporteur to visit the country between 5 and 15 November 2001.

9. By a letter dated 2 August 2001, the Government of **Lebanon** replied that the Lebanese justice system had not conducted any inquiries concerning attacks against migrants.

10. On 2 August 2001, the Government of **Guatemala** transmitted a detailed report on the protection of migrants in Guatemala, which includes information on the characteristics of migrant populations in Guatemala, legislation and administrative measures which have been adopted, as well as specific commitments made in regard to this question, within the framework of the Guatemalan Peace Accords. The Government also reported that it was currently studying a proposal that IOM had made to it for the implementation of a series of projects and programmes which would provide support to Guatemalan residents abroad, to repatriated nationals, as well as to nationals of other countries, and address other general social problems linked to the migratory phenomenon. In addition, the Government reported on a number of measures it had taken to guarantee the specialized training of immigration and law enforcement officials, which included the creation of a specialized training unit within the structure of the national authority for migration and courses on

immigration issues in the new civilian police academy. Along with 10 other countries from the region, Guatemala was also a member of the Regional Conference on Migration. Guatemala has signed, although not ratified, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

11. On 9 August 2001, the Government of **Spain** provided a reply concerning the protection of migrants. It stated that the Spanish Criminal Code and the Ley Orgánica 4/2000 (revised by the Ley Orgánica 8/2000) included anti-discriminatory norms which protected migrant populations. In addition, under the latter measures had been introduced in order to combat the trafficking and exploitation of migrants. The Government also stated that the aim of article 35 of the Ley Orgánica 4/2000 was to protect the human rights of migrant children. At the international level, the Government of Spain had signed the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its two accompanying protocols.

12. Information provided by the Governments of Bahrain, Belarus and Qatar has been transmitted for translation and will be included in the next report of the Secretary-General on the protection of migrants.

13. In response to the Secretary-General's request for Governments to report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/166 entitled "Protection of migrants", last year the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also transmitted a note verbale to Governments requesting them to report on the status of implementation of the resolution.

14. On 3 July 2001, the Government of **Kuwait** stated, in connection with General Assembly resolution 54/166, that the Kuwaiti Constitution and labour legislation guaranteed protection and assistance to immigrant workers, safeguarding their employment rights without any form of discrimination. Furthermore, it was reported that the relevant authorities were revising labour legislation governing the private sector with a view to producing model legislation conducive to the implementation of a policy of economic and social development. The new bill was viewed as an important step forward, since it took into account to a large extent the observations and recommendations made by the Committee of Experts on the Implementation of International Labour Treaties and Recommendations. Moreover, with a view to ensuring greater protection and assistance for workers, the Government of Kuwait indicated that an Advisory Committee on all matters relating to employment had been set up pursuant to Ministerial Decision No. 151 of 24 August 1999. It also noted that immigrant labour in the State of Kuwait comprised over 130 nationalities and that the total number of male and female employees came to roughly 640,931 on 6 June 2000.

15. The Government of **Azerbaijan** responded with two communications dated 28 July and 23 August 2000 on the issue of protection of migrants. It stated that article 69 of the Constitution defined the rights of aliens and stateless persons residing in Azerbaijan. Under that article, aliens and stateless persons present in the Republic of Azerbaijan had the same rights and duties as Azerbaijani citizens, unless specified otherwise by law or an international treaty to which Azerbaijan was a signatory. According to the 1991 Employment Act, the aim of State employment policy was to ensure that all citizens residing in Azerbaijan, irrespective of their nationality, sex, age, social status, political views or attitude to religion, were able to exercise the right to work and the right to free choice of employment. It was further stated that since 1997 the Government of Azerbaijan, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), had been implementing a programme for the harmonized management of migration. Under that programme, a draft blueprint for a State migration policy had been prepared and was now being considered by the Government. A legislative and organizational framework to regulate migratory processes was currently being developed. The Economic Migration Act, adopted in October 1999, outlined the legal, economic and social principles of economic migration into the Republic of Azerbaijan and regulated the relations arising from economic migration. Article 10 of that Act provided for the social welfare of economic migrants and members of their families. Such persons had the same entitlements to social welfare as those which the law conferred on working Azerbaijani citizens and members of their families (except for pension rights). Pension arrangements for economic migrants and members of their families were dealt with under Azerbaijan's bilateral and multilateral treaties. The law prohibits restrictions on the reunification of economic migrants with their families. As well as developing a legislative framework, the Government of Azerbaijan has recently been deepening bilateral

cooperation on migration issues with Kazakhstan, Moldova, Georgia, Turkey, the Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia. According to the information sent, one of the most pressing problems confronting Azerbaijan was the continued presence in the country of large numbers of forced migrants.

16. On 31 July 2000, the Government of **Denmark** reported that immigrants and refugees generally enjoyed legal equality with Danish citizens and, like all citizens, they were protected by law against discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religious belief, political observation, sexual orientation or national, social or ethnic origin. The Government stated that General Assembly resolution 54/166 did not in itself lead to any specific changes of Danish immigration policies. However, owing to the importance of the effective protection of the human rights of immigrants and refugees, the Government did set up a Committee of Ministers who launched an overall plan of action with 78 initiatives for the improved integration of those groups to society. Finally, the Government of Denmark gave information on the legal measures which existed to combat trafficking and smuggling on its territory.

17. On 2 August 2000, the Government of **Georgia** responded that the second chapter of the Constitution of Georgia referred to fundamental human rights and freedoms and established guarantees for the exercise of those rights by all individuals, including migrants who were within the jurisdiction of Georgia. The Government additionally provided a list of Acts approved by the Parliament of Georgia concerning migration issues and reported that a special State commission was created in order to ameliorate coordination on issues concerning migrants between different government bodies. In regard to cooperation with organizations, the Government noted its tight links with UNHCR and IOM, as well as the Council of Europe. Furthermore, the Government of Georgia specified that a permanent legal and institutional reform in connection with migration issues was in progress and that preference was given to a liberal regime for migrants.

18. On 15 August 2000, the Government of **Colombia** informed the Secretary-General on issues relating to the protection of migrants. It stated, inter alia, that the Colombian Constitution guaranteed the principle of non-discrimination and that Colombian legislation reflected the decisions and recommendations made by the United Nations, and particularly the Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals Who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live (General Assembly resolution 40/144, annex) and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/44 on the human rights of migrants. Colombia fulfils its obligation under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations to guarantee consular assistance for those migrants in its territory who request it. Moreover, all aliens have the right to be assisted by an interpreter if they are before a Colombian court and are not fluent in Spanish. It was also reported that the new Colombian Criminal Code has introduced new developments such as the punishment of human trafficking.

19. On 22 August 2000, the Government of **Slovakia** provided information about the procedures which have been implemented to process asylum claims and repatriate rejected asylum seekers, with the respective collaboration of UNHCR and IOM.

20. On 14 September 2000, the Government of **Venezuela** sent a communication enumerating the existing legal norms which protect migrants within its territory. Among the most significant aspects, the Government emphasized the importance given to the effective implementation of international accords on the matter, the fact that a lack of internal legislation should not hinder the protection of internationally recognized human rights, the provision of non-discrimination and equality of all persons, and the adoption of sanctions against the abuse and ill-treatment of certain vulnerable groups. The Government of Venezuela also reported on its regional agreements, particularly with regard to the Andean Community of Nations and how they related to migratory issues. Finally, the Government of Venezuela supplied information regarding a report which was submitted to contribute to the work of the Special Rapporteur on migrant workers of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in which Venezuela indicated, inter alia, that the National Commission on Migration was created to design and formulate a national policy on migration.

21. The Government of **Cyprus** responded, on 26 September 2000, that the provisions of its labour law and other relevant legislation applied equally to nationals and non-nationals. In that connection, the Cypriot Government stated that it was established that remuneration and other benefits for foreign workers

would be those defined for Cypriot workers by the relevant collective agreements, that the transportation costs for foreign workers from their countries of origin were borne exclusively by the employer and that special health insurance covered the foreign worker at least to the same extent as that provided by the collective agreements for Cypriot workers. Moreover, the Government added that the existing policy provided that complaints by foreign workers on labour matters were to be examined by its District Labour Offices. The Government of Cyprus pointed out that Cypriot legislation did not discriminate between Cypriot and foreign workers regarding social security rights and obligations. Finally, foreign workers and their families who resided legally or worked regularly in Cyprus were entitled to welfare benefits and services under the same conditions as nationals.

22. On 15 December 2000, the Government of **Madagascar** stated that the Constitution of Madagascar and law No. 62-006 of 2 June 1962, which regulates migratory control and management, were proof of Madagascar's policy of tolerance towards migrants. The Government of Madagascar reported that the only problems which existed with regard to its migration policies were those related to complaints owing to delays in issuing visas for foreigners, the fact that after legislative reform foreigners were required to associate themselves to a national in order to purchase property in the country and the fact that permanent residents must wait five years before they could apply for Malagasy nationality. Furthermore, it was stated that there was no racism or violence of any kind against migrants in Madagascar.

23. Attention should be drawn to the status of ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990. Until 15 August 2001 the following 16 countries had ratified the Convention: Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Uruguay. The Secretary-General commends these ratifications and welcomes the fact that 10 more States have signed that international instrument. The Secretary-General urges all Member States to take all the necessary steps in order to ratify the Convention promptly and to bring it into force so as to ensure respect for the human rights of all migrant workers and their families.

24. The General Assembly, in its resolution 55/92, welcomed the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants that close links be established between her work and that of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The Special Rapporteur participated in the first and second preparatory committees for the World Conference, submitting documents which aimed to contribute to the identification of the main issues that the Conference should address in regard to migrants. The Special Rapporteur also participated in the expert seminars held in Addis Ababa and Santiago de Chile, in September and October 2000, respectively, as well as the regional meetings of Dakar and Tehran in January and February 2001. The Special Rapporteur will make her final recommendations to the World Conference during her participation in Durban and has stated that she will remain committed to the follow-up of the Conference. At the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights the Special Rapporteur submitted her second report (E/CN.4/2001/83), in which she focused on the legal framework of her mandate as well as on specific matters requiring her attention, such as irregular migration and the situation of migrant women and unaccompanied children, among others. Following the adoption of Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2000/48 and 2001/52, in which the Special Rapporteur was requested to include in her work schedule a programme of visits, she visited Canada from 17 to 30 September 2000 and presented her findings in an addendum to her report to the Commission at its fifty-seventh session (E/CN.4/2001/83/Add.1). In the context of her mandate, the Special Rapporteur will carry out an official mission to Mexico and the Mexican-United States of America border from 18 September to 5 October 2001. She will also carry out a fact-finding mission to Ecuador from 5 to 15 November, pursuant to the invitation extended to her by the Government of Ecuador. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur has accepted the invitation of the Government of the Philippines and is expected to visit the Philippines early in 2002. Finally, the Special Rapporteur has continued to monitor the regional initiatives which have developed in connection with migratory issues, particularly in Europe and the Americas, and has

participated in several regional and international forums around the world, which she will report on to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-eighth session next year.

United Nations A/56/311

General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 August 2001

Original: English

Fifty-sixth session
Item 134 of the provisional agenda*
Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Comprehensive study of the question of honorariums payable to members of organs and subsidiary organs of the United Nations

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Secretary-General submitted his last report on the question of honorariums to the General Assembly in document A/53/643. The report reviewed the history of the payment of honorariums to subsidiary organs of the United Nations and the practice followed by other organizations within the United Nations system.

2. The main conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General are contained in paragraphs 61 to 64 of the report as follows:

> "61. On the basis of the present review, the Secretary-General would conclude that the criteria and authority for the payment of honorariums to members of organs and subsidiary organs rests solely with the legislative authority of the General Assembly.
>
> "62. That authority has been exercised by the General Assembly ... Accordingly, the Assembly may wish to consider whether payment of honorariums should be extended to the members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture.
>
> "63. With regard to the level of the honorariums, it will be recalled that the General Assembly last revised the rates effective 1 January 1981. The Assembly may wish to consider increasing the rates of honorariums by 25 per cent ...
>
> "64. Such an increase would result in revised annual rates of honorariums in respect of those cases the General Assembly had already authorized on an exceptional basis, namely, ILC, INCB, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of

* A/56/150.

01-51746 (E) 100901

Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and also apply to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture, on an exceptional basis, if the General Assembly so decides, as follows:

	Rate of honorariums (United States dollars)		
	Present rate[a]	*Proposed rate*	*Increase*
Chairmen (Presidents)	5 000	6 250	1 250
Vice-Chairman of INCB	4 000	5 000	1 000
Other members	3 000	3 750	750
Additional amount payable to members of ILC when acting as special rapporteurs, conditional upon the preparation of specific reports of studies between sessions of the Commission	2 500	3 125	625

[a] As authorized by the General Assembly in its resolutions 35/218, 36/240 A and 44/201 A."

3. The financial implications for the year 1999 of the above conclusions of the Secretary-General are contained in paragraph 65 of the report as follows:

Budget section	*Body*	*United States dollars*
6. Legal affairs	International Law Commission (Chairman, 32 members, 6 rapporteurs)	29 000
	United Nations Administrative Tribunal (Chairman, 6 members)	5 750
7A. Economic and social affairs	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Chairman, 22 members)	17 750
15. International drug control	International Narcotics Control Board (President, 2 Vice-Presidents, 10 members)	10 750
22. Human rights	Human Rights Committee (Chairman, 17 members)	14 000
	Committee on the Rights of the Child (Chairman, 17 members)	14 000
	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Chairman, 17 members)	70 000
	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Chairman, 17 members)	70 000
	Committee against Torture (Chairman, 9 members)	40 000
Total		**271 250**

4. The comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the above proposals of the Secretary-General are contained in paragraphs 116 to 121 of the report of the Advisory

Committee on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/54/7). In paragraph 119 of that report, the Advisory Committee stated, inter alia, "the Assembly may wish to consider increasing the rates of honorariums by 25 per cent. ... However, the Committee recommends that, should the Assembly decide to increase the rates, it should be done with effect from 1 January 2000".

5. Although the report of the Secretary-General was before the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, the report was neither formally introduced nor debated in either the formal or the informal sessions. Subsequently, in paragraph 45 of section III of its resolution 54/249 of 23 December 1999, the Assembly endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee contained in its reports on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, subject to the provisions of resolution 54/249, which made no specific reference to the question of honorariums.

6. Following the adoption of that resolution, the Secretariat was requested to indicate whether or not the General Assembly had endorsed the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the payment of honorariums. In light of the ambiguity reflected in paragraph 5 above, the Secretariat was not in a position to provide such a precise indication.

7. In order to provide a definitive and clear answer, the Assembly is requested to indicate whether or not it endorses the recommendations on the payment of honorariums as described above and to indicate an effective date either retroactive to January 2000 or prospectively to January 2002. In either case, budgetary provision would be required to meet such additional expenses within the respective biennia.